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combed with air cells that buoy them up like a cork, and prevent their diving,\* neither do they plunge for their food when upon the wing, like their cousins the Brown Pelicans, and therefore have to adopt fishing habits suited to shallow waters. I have often noticed the birds in flocks, pairs, and alone, swimming on the water, with partially-opened wings and head drawn down and back, the bill just clearing the water, ready to strike and gobble up the prey within their reach; if, when so fishing, they ran into a shoal of minnows, would stretch out their necks, drop their heads upon the water, and with open mouths and extended pouches scoop up the tiny fry. Their favorite time for fishing on the sea-shore is during the incoming tide, as with it come the small fishes to feed upon the insects caught in the rise, and upon the low forms of life in the drift as it washes shoreward, the larger fishes following in their wake, each from the smallest to the largest eagerly engaged in taking life in order to sustain life. All sea birds know this, and the time of its coming, well; and the White Pelicans that have been patiently waiting in line along the beach quietly move into the water and glide smoothly out, so as not to frighten the life beneath, and when at a suitable distance from the shore form into line in accordance with the sinuosities of the beach, each facing shoreward and awaiting the signal from their leader to start, upon which all is commotion, the birds rapidly striking the water with their wings, throwing it high above them, and plunging their heads in and out, fairly making the water foam, as they move in an almost unbroken line, filling their pouches as they go; and, when satisfied with their catch, they wade and waddle into line again upon the beach, where they remain to rest, standing or sitting as suits them best, until they have leisurely swallowed the fishes in their nets; and then, if undisturbed, generally rise in a flock and circle for a long time high in air. Off the south coast of Florida (a coral formation) the shoal water often extends out for miles, and the tide is scarcely perceptible. There the birds have no occasion to dive, but gather their food by coursing, and in such places the Brown Pelicans, so expert, and in dropping upon their prey in deep water are forced, in order to save their necks unbroken, to feed in like manner; this is especially noticeable in the shallow ponds within the Everglades. Several years ago, in the month of September, I had the pleasure of observing a small flock of the birds fishing in the Neosho river, Kansas, when late at eve in their southward flight they were forced by tired wings to stop. The place selected was in still, deep water, at the head of a fall or rapids in the stream, where the water for some fifteen rods, and at a depth of about six inches, was rippling and dashing over the rocks—a natural feeding-ground for the fishes. The birds, after first bathing and dressing up their feathers, giving particular attention to their primaries, would, without any unity of action, as hunger moved them, float down over the rapids, picking up and at the fishes here and there, until the still water below was reached, when they would rise and fly back, to float down again, leisurely repeating this mode of fishing until it was quite dark.

#### NOTES ON THE YELLOW-TAILED CASSIQUE.

(*Gymnostinops montezumæ*.)

BY N. S. GOSS.

The birds are known by the natives as the "Oropendula," also as the "Inca bird," but are generally called "Yellow-Tailed Cassiques," or rather, "Yellow-Tails." They are quite common in the low forest lands of Central America, on the Atlantic side, but

\* The statement in "North American Birds—Water Birds," vol. 2, page 137, that this species "dive with great celerity," is in error.

I did not find them upon the Pacific slope, nor upon the high mountain lands. They are social in habits, going in couples, and generally in flocks of from ten to fifty or more. They are noisy, their voice harsh, coarse and discordant; an indescribable jargon — even their whistling notes are not musical. In their food habits they are omnivorous, but seem to prefer fruits and berries, often doing great damage on the plantations when the bananas, plantains and mangoes are ripening. For breeding purposes they select large thorny trees, in an open space where the limbs of other trees do not touch, so as to be beyond the reach of reptiles, monkeys, raccoons, and other climbing nest-robbers.

Their pendulous, gourd-shaped nests are strongly and ingeniously woven and suspended to the ends of the boughs of the tallest branches, and are made of fibrous strippings from plants and from frond-like leaves, with here and there a rootlet. The bottoms are lined with leaves. Some writers state that the birds build their nests of grasses, but I have been unable to find any in those that I have examined, and I am inclined to think this large species rarely, if ever, use it, and if they do the blades, so brittle when dry, must be of a very strong, hemp-like nature, to long sustain the weight of the nest and its occupants against the wear and tear of the storms and winds.

The entrance is a purse-like slit at the top; the average length of the nest, about three feet; in diameter, at the rounded base, nine to ten inches. I have never found less than five nor more than twenty-one nests in a tree; they are said, however, to build as many as fifty, and even more, but the late growing demand in the States for bananas causes the producers, heretofore so indifferent and indolent, to be more watchful, and the large colonies of the birds are fast thinning out. The only eggs that have come under my observation I collected March 13th, 1887, at Cayo, a small village on the Balize river, in British Honduras, and near its western boundary-line. There were thirteen nests in the tree (a species of locust); these were all hanging from the boughs of one branch, from two to three feet apart, and at least seventy-five feet from the ground, but the dense undergrowth, a tangled mass of young palms, bushes and vines, buoyed up the tree in its fall like a cushion, so that, to my surprise, I was able to save unbroken three sets of fresh eggs, two in each nest; and as the same number of the broken eggs were found in the other nests, together with the further fact that the nests were not large enough to rear over a pair of the birds, I think it safe to enter two eggs as a full set; and I am also led to believe, from the great difference in the dimensions of the eggs and in the size of the male and female birds (see measurements given below), that they are hatched in pairs, and as they go in couples, remain together during life.

*First set:* 1.49x1.10, 1.42x.96; ground color bluish white, thinly speckled and spotted with brownish black, and dark purple stains.

*Second set:* 1.49x1.08, 1.40x1.00; ground color bluish white, clouded and marbled with pale rusty brown, and a few zigzag, hair-like streaks of a darker tint, the clouding thickest upon the largest egg.

*Third set:* 1.50x1.03, 1.40x.98; the first bluish white, without mark or stain (an abnormal egg); the others peckled and spotted thinly with pale rusty brown, and a few faint purple stains.

The broken eggs examined were all speckled and spotted with either brownish black or pale rusty brown in marked contrast, the coloring matter by sets, however, largely alike.

A pair of the birds which I shot and mounted in the winter of 1886, at Santa Tomas, Guatemala, measure as follows:

Sex.	Length.	Stretch of wing.		Tail.	Tarsus.	Bill.
			Wing.			
Female.....	16.50	24.00	7.50	5.75	1.70	2.30
Male.....	22.00	32.00	9.75	8.25	2.00	3.60